

Who is the Holy Spirit?
Selected Scriptures
ABC 1/1/23

In 12 days I leave for Tanzania where I will be teaching local pastors & church leaders for 2 weeks. The topics I've been given to teach are the doctrines of Scripture (bibliology), God (theology proper), Jesus (Christology), & the Holy Spirit (pneumatology). I've taught the doctrine of God & Scriptures at other times & have shared with you what I've taught.¹ We spent Advent looking at Jesus as fully God, fully man, accomplished by the Virgin Birth, & then how He fulfills the 3 anointed offices of Prophet, Priest, & King as the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One. Today & next Sunday we'll be taking a look, an overview, of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. As with the other 2 members of the Godhead, we'll just scratch the surface because our triune God is infinite & we'll spend all eternity getting to know Him better. As with all of these important truths, I've struggled to get it down to a manageable size. Looking at the Holy Spirit, is no different. Where do we begin? Because the NT gives 4 commands to Christians relating to the Holy Spirit, 2 positive & 2 negative: **Be filled with the Spirit** (Eph 5:18), **Live by the Spirit** (Gal 5:16). **Do not grieve the Spirit** (Eph 4:30), & **Do not quench the Spirit** (1 Thes 5:19), I thought about using that as an outline. But there's so much more about the Holy Spirit than those commands I decided not to. Study them on your own. Let's start with a good summary, based on Scripture, found in our church's doctrinal statement.² Here's what it says:

2. We believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons - Father, Son, & Holy Spirit - co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power & glory, & having the same attributes & perfections (Dt 6:4; 2 Cor 13:14).

3. A. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, & of judgment; & that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling & sealing them unto the day of redemption (Jn 16:8-11; 2 Cor 3:6; 1 Cor 12:12-14; Rom 8:9; Eph 1:13-14).

B. We believe that He is the Divine Teacher who guides believers into all truth; & that it is the privilege & duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit (Jn 16:13; 1 Jn 2:20, 27; Eph 5:18).

¹ www.ashlandbiblechurch.com/may-22-2022-zambia-report-1----bibliology.html; www.ashlandbiblechurch.com/june-5-2022-zambia-report-2-theology-proper.html

² www.ashlandbiblechurch.com/what-we-believe.html

I believe that's what the Bible teaches. The Holy Spirit is God, co-equal, co-existent, & co-eternal with the Father & the Son. He possess all the attributes of deity. He regenerates the believing sinner, indwells all who've been converted, & seals us, keeping us securely in the family of God. We know that & agree with it. But what does it mean to us personally? Which person of the Godhead do you feel closest to? Know the most about? It's probably not the Holy Spirit. We've all had earthly fathers, so trying to understand the concept of a heavenly Father isn't too hard. The Son of God isn't difficult to relate to either. He was born as a human & grew up as we did, experiencing the same temptations we face, although without sin. Our familiarity with His birth, life, death, & resurrection cause us to feel close to & grateful for Him. But the Holy Spirit? Or, as those of us who grew up with the KJV Bible, the Holy *Ghost*. As Swindoll says, *To the uninitiated the name still sounds borderline weird*.³ It's like He's the spooky member of the Trinity. Admit it, most of the Holy Spirit's work & ministry seems a little vague to us. He's the easiest Member of the Godhead to depersonalize. It's my prayer that we get to know the One who longs to fill & empower us. The Holy Spirit isn't as mysterious & illusive as we might think. He's a vital part of our Christian life. But because we're so unfamiliar with His ways, we often miss out. Believe it or not, the Bible has much to say about Him, some of it very familiar. He convicts of sin (Jn 16:8-11), teaches (Jn 16:12-15), guides (Rom 8:14), assures (Rom 8:16), intercedes (Rom 8:26), directs, & warns us (Acts 20:22-23). There are also many vss about Him that are a little more obscure. For example, Paul writes: **I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds & afflictions await me** (Acts 20:22-23). What does he mean by that? & what are the Spirit's groanings & interceding on our behalf in Rom 8? What does 1 Cor 2:9-13 mean when it talks about the Holy Spirit's **searching all things**, including **even the depths of God**? What about His revealing those things to us? What is the **anointing** of the Spirit (1 Jn 2:18-20)? How do we **know the Spirit of God** (1 Jn 4:1-3)? What is the **witness** of the Spirit (1 Jn 5:5-9)? How is the **fruit of the Spirit** produced (Gal 5:22-

³*Flying Closer to the Flame*, p 20

23)? What are the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:4-11)? What about all the things we see on YouTube or TV that are claimed to be done in the name of the Spirit but are just strange in light of Scripture? Barking in the Spirit? What's that all about? We probably won't answer all those questions or all the questions you might have. But hopefully we'll be reminded once again of who the Holy Spirit is & what He does for each one of us. Before we get to that though, some of our confusion about the Holy Spirit comes from a distortion of biblical truths. Here are 4 ways in which we can go wrong.⁴

1. We must remember that God is an incomprehensible mystery. He's revealed enough about Himself for us to come to Him in faith, but we don't know everything. He is above us, unequalled, & transcendent. Even the term *person* in reference to God is hard to understand. We'll never fully comprehend all there is to know about God.

2. Even when we acknowledge the incomprehensible revelation of God as Trinity, it isn't always easy to connect the Holy Spirit to our experience. We know what a Father-Son relation is in human terms, but where does the Spirit fit? Some have begun referring to the Spirit as *Mother* to make the 3 Persons of the Trinity more understandable to us & our experience.⁵ But this lacks biblical foundation. Even if the Spirit is likened to a mother or a hen in a few vss, this is in the Spirit's relation to creation, not within the Godhead. We simply don't have many texts about the Spirit's role in the Trinity. Even in John's gospel, where we find most of Jesus' teaching about the Spirit, the emphasis falls on the relation of Jesus as eternal Son to His Father. Nevertheless, we have a great deal of revelation concerning the Spirit's work in creation, redemption, & sanctification.

3. The Holy Spirit is so actively involved in our lives, we can easily take His presence for granted or identify Him with our own inner self. Domesticating the Spirit like this, to an almost inner mysticism, confusing Him with our own thoughts & voice is wrong. That's not who He is. The Holy Spirit is the Person who works within us, even to the point of indwelling us & interceding in our

⁴ Adapted from Michael Horton's, *Rediscovering The Holy Spirit: God's Perfecting Presence in Creation, Redemption, & Everyday Life*

⁵ Clark H. Pinnock, "The Role of the Spirit in Creation," *Asbury Theological Journal* 52, pp 47-54

hearts. But the Holy Spirit isn't our spirit & His voice isn't to be confused with our voice. The Spirit is a divine Person within us, not a divine part of us.

4. When we have a proper focus on Jesus we may wrongly think the Spirit has a minor part in the biblical drama. As with the other dangers, this is a distortion of the truth rather than a contradiction of it. After all, Jesus taught us to read Scripture with Himself at the center (Lk 24:25–27; Jn 5:39). He taught us that the Spirit **will testify about & glorify** Him (Jn 15:26; 16:14–15). Unfortunately, the Holy Spirit's ministry today has been distorted into being Christian-centered rather than Christ-centered. JI Packer compares the Holy Spirit to a spotlight that illumines a glorious cathedral at night. One doesn't stare into the light but beholds the Savior by that light. He writes:

*He is, so to speak, the hidden floodlight shining on the Savior. Or think of it this way. It is as if the Spirit stands behind us, throwing light over our shoulder, onto Jesus, who stands facing us. The Spirit's message to us is never, 'Look at Me; listen to Me; come to Me; get to know Me,' but always, 'Look at Him, & see His glory; listen to Him, & hear His word; go to Him, & have His life; get to know Him, & taste His gift of joy & peace.'*⁶

You can be sure the Spirit is active wherever Jesus is held up as the Savior of sinners. Even when we turn our sight to the Spirit, we always find Him engaged in something related to Jesus. There's a question we can ask of anything claiming to be a work of the Spirit: *Does it reveal & glorify Jesus?* That's the desire of the Spirit of God.⁷ If it doesn't exalt Jesus it's not a work of the Holy Spirit. For all of this & more, we need to take a step back & get a clearer picture of the Spirit Himself, His person & His work, in order to recognize Him as Someone other than Jesus or ourselves, much less *something*, such as a divine power or resource. We need to know who He is & what He does. Then, hopefully, we'll gain a fresh dependence on Him in every area of our lives.

1. Is The Holy Spirit a Person or a Power? The place to begin is with the nature of the Holy Spirit Himself. & the 1st question is, should we even use the pronoun *Himself*? Is the Holy Spirit a real Person whose work is to save & sanctify us or is He a power that we're to use for our own benefit? If we think of the Holy Spirit as a power, our thoughts will be, *How can I get more of the Holy Spirit?*

⁶ *Keep In Step With The Spirit: Finding Fullness in Our Walk With God*, pp 66-67

⁷ Arturo G. Azurdia III, *Spirit Empowered Preaching: Involving the Holy Spirit in Your Ministry*, p 49

If we think of the Holy Spirit as a Person, we'll ask, *How can the Holy Spirit have more of me?* The 1st thought isn't biblical. The 2nd is NT Christianity. Reuben Torrey states clearly,

*The conception of the Holy Spirit as a divine influence or power that we are somehow to get hold of & use, leads to self-exaltation & self-sufficiency. One who so thinks of the Holy Spirit & who at the same time imagines that he has received the Holy Spirit will almost inevitably be full of spiritual pride & strut about as if he belonged to some superior order of Christians... But if we once grasp the thought that the Holy Spirit is a divine person of infinite majesty & glory & holiness & power, who in marvellous condescension has come into our hearts to make his abode there & take possession of our lives & make use of them, it will put us in the dust & keep us in the dust. I can think of no thought more humbling or more overwhelming than the thought that a person of divine majesty & glory dwells in my heart & is ready to use even me.*⁸

This distinction in outlook is seen in the pages of the NT. On one hand, there's the case of Simon the magician, whose story is told in Acts 8. Simon was a citizen of Samaria to which Philip had come preaching the gospel. Apparently, Simon believed in Jesus & was saved because we read, **Even Simon himself believed; & after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, & as he observed signs & great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed** (Acts 8:13). Simon knew very little about Christianity, however. So when he saw the miracles that were performed & was amazed by them, he fell into the error of thinking the Holy Spirit was a power that could be bought. Later, when Peter & John came to see the work in Samaria & were used by God to impart the Spirit to others, Simon offered the disciples money so that they'd give him **this power** (Acts 8:19 ESV). Peter replied,

May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, & pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you (Acts 8:20–22).

The contrasting example comes from the beginning of the missionary work involving Paul & Barnabas. In this case we're told, **While they were ministering to the Lord & fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas & Saul for the work to which I have called them"** (Acts 13:2). In the 1st example, an individual wanted to get & use God. In the 2nd, God got & used 2 individuals.

But, some recognize there are passages & sections of the Bible in which the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit isn't evident. The OT often speaks of the Spirit of God somewhat vaguely. Gen 1:2

⁸The Person & Work of the Holy Spirit, pp 8–9

says, **the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters**. It sometimes refers to individuals of whom it's said that **the Spirit of the Lord clothed** them (Judg 6:34; 2 Chron 24:20 ESV). These vss may give hints of the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit but in the OT there's very little in the way of a clear presentation of the personal distinctness of the Holy Spirit. It's entirely different when we come to the NT. Here the Holy Spirit is shown to be a member of the Trinity, equal in all ways to both the Father & Son & yet distinct from them. This doesn't mean there are 3 gods. As has been succinctly stated:

1. God is 3 Persons
2. Each Person is fully God
3. God is One

There aren't 3 gods, there's one God comprised of 3 Persons. There are 3 Persons but in a way that's beyond our understanding, these 3 are one. We should never refer to the Holy Spirit as *It*. He's as much a Person as the Father & Jesus are. When we use the word *person* we think of humans. We expect a person to be like us with a body & soul. We speak of a person dying when we should say their body died. We know that when a person dies, they haven't ceased to exist. Their soul is either in heaven or hell. A *person* then, doesn't have to have a body. Likewise, we know angels exist as real beings, yet they don't have human bodies & God Himself is spirit & a person. Because of this, if the Holy Spirit has similar characteristics as *persons* do, then we can conclude that He too is a person. A person is defined as one who has knowledge, feelings, & a will, & this is what's clearly said about the Spirit. Without going into great detail, a person has these things & a thing lacks them. The chair you're sitting on is not a person. It has no intelligence, feelings, or will. But the Holy Spirit is not a thing because He has intelligence, emotions, & will. In Jn 14:16–17 Jesus says regarding the Holy Spirit,

I will ask the Father, & He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you & will be in you.

If the Spirit were only a power, this promise would be more like compensation: *I am going to be taken from you, but I will give you something to make up for My departure*. But He isn't merely a power. He isn't a thing that's being given but another divine personality, a personality who has

knowledge. How do we know this? Because He'll know of the disciples' needs, identify with them in their distress; & comfort & help them in fulfillment of the Lord's commission. The NT evidence for the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit can be grouped into these categories:⁹

A. Personal Actions of the Holy Spirit. Jn 16:8–11 speaks of the Spirit's work of convicting unbelievers.

& He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin & righteousness & judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; & concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father & you no longer see Me; & concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

The Holy Spirit convicts **the world concerning sin, righteousness, & judgment**. Sin refers not to sin in general but specifically to the ultimate sin of refusing to **believe in Jesus**. The issue that determines people's eternal destiny is how they react to the Spirit's convicting ministry concerning their own sin & the provision of forgiveness by grace through Jesus Christ. Not only does the Spirit convict unbelievers of their sin, but also of the necessity of having the perfect righteousness of Christ (cf Mt 5:20, 48). When our wickedness is compared to His sinless holiness, our sin is seen for the detestable evil it is & we're faced with the utter impossibility of salvation by any effort, work, or achievement on our part. Those who listen to the Spirit's testimony about their utter sinfulness & Jesus' perfect righteousness & respond to the gospel in genuine faith, are instantly clothed with Christ's righteousness. Their sins are placed fully on Him &, in His death at the hands of God's holy justice, He paid the penalty in full (Phil 3:9; cf Rom 3:21–22; 4:5, 13; 5:21; 10:10; 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21). The Holy Spirit also convicts the world **concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged**. The world's judgments are often wrong & evil, as is seen by its rejection of the Son of God. While the world is incapable of always judging righteously (Jn 7:24), the Spirit always does so. The **ruler of this world** is Satan (12:31; 14:30; 1 Jn 5:19) & he's already **been judged** (Rev 12:7–9; Lk 10:18). He was totally defeated at the cross (Col 2:15; Heb 2:14; 1 Jn 3:8). Though he's been defeated & judged, the final sentence against him won't be carried out until the end of the millennium (Rev 20:10). In the meantime, he goes about as the god of this age, seeking to capture & devour souls. The sobering warning to those who embrace the world &

⁹ These points are suggested by George Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, p 109

its system is that since its ruler won't escape judgment, neither will they, unless they repent. The Devil's fate guarantees the judgment of every unrepentant sinner. There are only 2 possible responses to the personal convicting work of the Spirit: repentance or rejection.¹⁰

B. The Holy Spirit's Mission is distinct from the Father's & the Son's. Jesus indicates this clearly in Jn 15:26. **When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me.** We'll talk more about this as we get into it. But the Spirit's work is different from the Father's & the Son's just as the Son's is different from the Father's & the Spirit's.

C. The Holy Spirit's rank & power are equal to those of the Father & the Son. The various trinitarian references express this clearly. In Mt 28:19, the disciples are told to baptize **in the name of the Father & the Son & the Holy Spirit.** In 2 Cor 13:14, Paul prays that **the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, & the love of God, & the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with all his readers.** Peter speaks of those who are Christians **according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ...** (1 Pt 1:2). Jude speaks of our being built up in the Christian faith as **we're praying in the Holy Spirit, keeping ourselves in the love of God, & waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life** (20–21). Clearly, the Holy Spirit is equal to the Father & the Son.

D. The appearances of the Holy Spirit in a visible form. At the baptism of Jesus, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, & a voice came out of heaven, **"You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased"** (Lk 3:22). On the day of Pentecost **there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, & they rested on each one of them** (Acts 2:3). These visible appearances show He's a distinct person from the other members of the godhead.

E. The sin against the Holy Spirit. We talked about this when we looked at Mk 3.¹¹ Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit implies offense against a personality (Mk 3:28-29). It's possible to grieve the Spirit

¹⁰ John F. MacArthur Jr., *John 12–21*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary, pp 197–198

¹¹ www.ashlandbiblechurch.com/october-9-2022-mark-320-35.html

according to Eph 4:30, which is rather hard to do if He doesn't have emotions. No matter what I might do to this podium, it will never grieve. As a Person, the Holy Spirit has emotions & feelings.

F. The gifts of the Holy Spirit. In 1 Cor 12:11, after having itemized the gifts, Paul writes, **one & the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.** The gifts of the Holy Spirit are distinguished from the Spirit Himself, indicating He's no mere force behind them but that He gives them **as He wills** (1 Cor 12:11) or *as He purposes*, which shows a definite act of His will.

These all show that the Holy Spirit is a Person. Yet the problem for many of us may not be so much with the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as with our attitude toward Him. Theoretically, many of us believe that the Holy Spirit is a Person, the 3rd person of the Trinity. But do we actually think of Him in this way? Do we think about Him at all? Perhaps we do what a woman did who attended a series of messages on the Holy Spirit at a Bible conference years ago. She listened carefully & then came up to the speaker to thank him for his teaching, saying, *Before your messages I never thought of it as a Person.* Obviously, she still wasn't thinking of the Holy Spirit as a person. How can you understand Mt 28:19, **in the name of the Father, & of the Son, & of the Holy Spirit**, as referring to 2 persons (Father & Son) & one thing (the Holy Spirit)? The Holy Spirit is a Person just as God the Father & God the Son are.

2. Is the Holy Spirit God? The proof of the Holy Spirit being a Person & not a force doesn't prove He's God. But if the Holy Spirit is God He must also be a Person because God is. Clearly the Holy Spirit is a distinct Person, but is He divine, is He God? Or is He some lesser being, perhaps an angel or an under god? Is the Holy Spirit full deity like the Father & the Son? Hopefully, you know the answer is *Yes!* One of the clearest indications of the full divinity of the Holy Spirit is found on the lips of Jesus when He promised to send the Spirit to the disciples to be **another Helper** (Jn 14:16). The important word here is **another**. In Greek there are 2 different words for *another*. One means *another just like the 1st one*, & the other means *totally different*. Jesus says He'll send the disciples a Person just like Himself. Was Jesus fully God? You better know the answer to that! Then so is the Holy Spirit. The 1st Helper is Jesus. He'd been the disciples' strength & counsel during the years of

His ministry among them. Now He's going away, & in His place He'll be sending a 2nd Helper who is just like Him. He's to be another divine Person living with them & in them. We see other evidence for the divinity of the Holy Spirit in these areas:

A. The divine qualities of the Holy Spirit. The phrase *Holy Spirit* is itself an example of His deity because the word *holy* designates the innermost essence of God's nature. He is the **Holy Father** (Jn 17:11) who is **holy, holy, holy** (Is 6:3), & Jesus is **the Holy One of God** (Jn 6:69; cf Mk 1:24). The Spirit is holy as God is holy. The Spirit knows the things of God in a way that we do not & in a way which implies He knows everything just as God does (1 Cor 2:11–12). The Spirit of God is also said to be omniscient (Jn 16:12–13; 1 Cor 2:10–11), omnipotent (Lk 1:35), & omnipresent (Ps 139:7–10). The Holy Spirit has all the same attributes as God Himself. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is divine.

B. The works of God attributed to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit does things that only God can do. Some of the works which only God can do & which the Holy Spirit does (& which show that He must be God) are:

- a) regeneration (causing a person to be born again, Jn 3:5–6),
- b) being the means of Mary's pregnancy with Jesus, His supernatural virgin birth (Lk 1:35), &...
- c) the creation of the world (Gen 1:2; Job 33:4; Ps 104:30).

The Spirit inspired & imparted the Scriptures (2 Pt 1:21). He's the agent of the new birth, salvation, sanctification (Jn 3:6; 1 Pt 1:2), & of resurrection (Rom 8:11). The Holy Spirit does the work of God because He is God.

C. The equality of the Holy Spirit with God the Father & God the Son. The Spirit is presented to us as equal with God the Father & God the Son. One of the proofs that the Holy Spirit is fully God is His identification with Yahweh in the OT. This is seen in passages where Scripture says Yahweh said something & the NT quotation of that same passage is attributed to the Spirit as the speaker. Isaiah 6:8 begins, **I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, & who will go for Us?"** In Acts 28:25–27, the Isaiah passage is quoted, beginning, **The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers, saying...** & then the quote. That clearly says that the Spirit, like Yahweh, is fully divine (cf Jer 31:31–34 & Heb 10:15–17).

D. The name of God is used interchangeably with Him. This goes hand-in-hand with what we just saw. In Acts 5:3–4, Peter says, **Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit & to keep back *some* of the price of the land?.... You have not lied to men but to God.** Clearly, the Holy Spirit is fully God. He is the 3rd member of the Trinity. Does it matter that we know that He is God? Yes! If we know & constantly recognize His deity, we'll recognize & rely on His work. J.I. Packer asks,

Do we honor the Holy Spirit by recognizing & relying on his work? Or do we slight him by ignoring it, & thereby dishonor, not merely the Spirit, but the Lord who sent him? In our faith: do we acknowledge the authority of the Bible, the prophetic OT & the apostolic NT which he inspired? Do we read & hear it with the reverence & receptiveness that are due to the Word of God? If not, we dishonor the Holy Spirit. In our life: do we apply the authority of the Bible, & live by the Bible, whatever men may say against it, recognizing that God's Word cannot but be true, & that what God has said he certainly means, & will stand to? If not, we dishonor the Holy Spirit, who gave us the Bible.

In our witness: do we remember that the Holy Spirit alone, by his witness, can authenticate our witness, & look to him to do so, & trust him to do so, & show the reality of our trust, as Paul did, by eschewing the gimmicks of human cleverness? If not, we dishonor the Holy Spirit.

Can we doubt that the present barrenness of the Church's life is God's judgment on us for the way in which we have dishonored the Holy Spirit? & in that case, what hope have we of its removal till we learn in our thinking & our praying & our practice to honor the Holy Spirit?¹²

The personality & deity of the Holy Spirit are practical teachings, because it is by the activity of this divine Being that the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ is made clear to us & changes our lives. He is the key to a vital & thriving Christian life.¹³ We must know & rely on Him.

PRAY/COMMUNION

Certain events invite us to both look back & to look forward, things like graduations, weddings, births, & New Year's Day. At these times we consider the significance of the past & anticipate the future. Communion is such an event. When we partake of communion *we look back to the cross* & are reminded of our sin that made Christ's death necessary. As we remember the cross, we must face our unworthiness to receive God's forgiveness & salvation. As we search our hearts & take inventory of our lives, we confess our sins & moral failures to the Lord. God's provision of our salvation prompts us to express thanks to God for blessing us with His grace & mercy. We realize

¹² *Knowing God*, p 63

¹³ Much material taken from James Montgomery Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith: A Comprehensive & Readable Theology*, Revised & Expanded, pp 381–386

He's present with us & we acknowledge to Him our gratitude for taking our place on the cross. Each time we partake of the Lord's Supper *we look forward* as well. We declare our confident expectation of Christ's return to earth. Even though His 2nd Advent is a future event, it influences our present behavior. Speaking of our hope in Christ, John says, **everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure** (1 Jn 3:3). As we share the elements of communion we remember the past, anticipate the future, & experience renewal in the present. The cross isn't some dusty fact of history, but has a dynamic present & future impact. We remember our Lord who died but is not dead. He lives & will return to earth to claim His own. We have a living hope because we have a living Lord. We look to the past & say, *thank you, Jesus for dying on the cross for me*, & we look to the future & say, **Come, Lord Jesus** (Rev 22:20), as we eagerly await for His return. PASS

The Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; & when He had given thanks, He broke it & said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me" (1 Cor 11:23-24).

Let's eat of the bread remembering what He's done for us & that He has given us His Spirit so that we might live for & glorify Him.

He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread & drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes (1 Cor 11:25-26).

Let's drink of the cup not only remembering what He's done but looking forward to His return.